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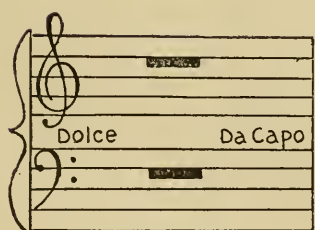
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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

CATTIVELLO'S QUARTETTO



THE HIGHLAND LIGHTS
SILVIO PELLICO
LA PRIMA DONNA
MY FIRST CASE



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BY

RICHARD U. CLARK.

New York
W. W. ...
...
...
... 1897 ...



THE HIGHLAND LIGHTS.

Very respectfully dedicated to Captain Caulkins, of the Sandy Hook Lightship, in memory of his father, who for many years was the keeper of Highland Light, Navesink, N. J.

CATTIVELLO.



THE HIGHLAND LIGHTS.



I.

A little while ago,
Moved by an impulse so,
We took a holiday,
Wherein we hoped to pay
A vow made on the sea
Some day to go and see
The man who fed the flame of Highland Lights,
The faithful watcher through long winter nights;
And tend the tribute of our thanks, that he
Might feel the world not all ungratefully
Passed and repassed in silence through his years
Of conscientious service. All in tears,
One met us at his door, who simply said:—
“Sir, he is dead.” Great God! Our thanks unsaid!

II.

And he, the keeper of those Highland Lights,
We oft had sought afar at sea to see,
Would never know our vow some day to go
And pay the thanks his faithful watch inspired
In us, who, weary of the long voyage, tired,
Looked for his lights as sentinels of home;
And when from out the darkness and the foam
We saw those lights arise, what gladness did we own!
How joyfully our hearts *Laus Deo* did intone!

III.

It was his wife who said, "Sir, he is dead.
Last night he died." We sighed, as we replied
That we this pilgrimage had made to pay
The thanks that we had vowed another day,
That we, too, grieved with her. 'Twould please him well;
We thought, could he have only heard us tell
How others thought of him; when, far at sea,
They watched who would be first of all to see
The welcome glimmer of the twin tower-lights
Wherein he spent his nights, with care to trim
Those beacon lights that have made eyes to swim
With pious tears of joy that there was home—
Home and a friend who watched lest in the night
We should arrive and find no welcoming light.

IV.

With hat in hand, bowed head, we left her with her dead.
Her guiding light had fled. He who those lights had fed
To guide us on our way, left her without a ray
Alone to find a port. We thought to linger there awhile,
And sat us down upon the stile near by,
And with a sigh we gazed upon the dancing waves below,
Upon the ships there passing to and fro,
Their white wings spread like sea gulls' wings, that they
May swiftly make their way to other lights beyond.

V.

Long, heavy swells come rushing to the shore,
Break on the beach with Neptune's sullen roar,
While the white foam that crests the sapphire blue
Rises in spray, crowned with the rainbow's hue,
A phantom light you saw ne'er to review,
Like human lives, the old give place to new.
So he, the keeper of these lights, no more
Will light them, as he has for years before.
These fires to-night another hand will light
For other eyes; in other hearts will rise
The joyful thanks we would have paid to-day
To him, who, like the ships and phantom lights,
To other lights beyond hath passed away.

VI.

Down on the beach are merry crowds at play.
Why he is gone, and they are here to-day,
We none of us can say, we but obey
Some influence innate that comes of fate.

VII.

A sudden breeze, with frolicsome intent,
Wings to our chapeau lent to fly away,
And on it flew to where a woman lay
All unobserved upon the green hillside,
Whose gaze was fixed upon the waters wide.
With sweet abandon, pillowed on a stone,
O'er which a shawl had carelessly been thrown,
Reclined a shapely head; the drapery
Of the recumbent form was gracefully
Arranged. As we approached, a noble hound
Sprang from the ground, and seemed about to bound
On us. The lady raised her head, and said:—
“Bedowin, down!” He, with a growl, obeyed,
And laid him at her feet. No more afraid,
We then drew near, and our excuses made
For our intrusion on their company.
'Twas plain to see 'twas not of our intent,
But clearly fate that us had thither sent.
The lady turned her head, and on us bent
A glance that kindled in our souls a fire,
A beacon light for life, that in the higher
Seas of human thought, with its quenchless flame,
Will light us to some port in realm of fame.

VIII.

“It was of fate I mused, sir. Pray sit there
Beneath that stunted cedar, and compare
It to a strong, heroic soul. For years
Its gnarled and twisted form with pain it rears
To battle with the foes that it oppose,
Yearly escaping its apparent fate—
Appointed fate decreeing isolate
It there shall stand, like spectre index finger
Of an unseen hand, reared on this bold headland.
Much as these frowning towers display a light
To guide aright ships passing in the night,
It points to Fate—that guides men in the way.”

IX.

You quote St. John, we said. Those soft brown eyes
Opened upon us with a glad surprise.
“Pray tell me quickly, sir, how that can be,
For many Christians disagree with me.”

X.

Deus was God—His word,
Fatum was fate, and fate the trinity
Of Time, past, present and to be,
By poets likened unto sisters three.
Doth not St. John confirm mythology?
In the beginning—God; with Him, the Word;
And the Word was God. That all have heard.
Then if the Word with God be God, truly
Fate is the God who universally
Reigns and obtains; though one hath many names,
Each typifies some power of sovereignty,
And all perfection are, in Unity.
He who the truth writ in mythology,
Sees not confirmed in Christianity,
Sees not the shadow events cast before.
To prove such thesis, measure with this rod—
Who admits fate acknowledges a God.

XI.

He who is good, the good in all will see,
And will revere all thought of Deity,
Wherever veiled or clear it chance to be;
But baser souls scoff at mythology.
As are the men, so are their lights alway;
As are the gods of men, still so are they;
For God is Light to light men on their way.
And he who worships at the purest shrine
Of its refulgence will himself so shine;
Just as these lights are sentinels of men,
Whose thought for others shines the light in them,
Will soon give place to other brighter lights
The Coming Man will rear upon their sites,
To voice with brighter flame from taller height,
Begin their day emerging from our night.
These and the former lights yet typify
The Light to come, the Light of Light most High.

XII.

“Are you a poet, sir, to reason so
Of such progressive types of lights and men?
To paint a triune God whom all may know,
In Him that is, will be, and Who hath been?
Your words imply a perfect harmony
In all that went before, and is to be.”

XIII.

Poets are born, their mission to perform,
They must the gallery of time adorn
With living scenes they in their day have seen;
Or in their dreams conceived, and they must glean
From harvests of the past an aftermath,
And therefrom cull the perfect golden grain
That in those faded sheaves may still remain;
And from such destined kernels then distill
Both nectar and ambrosia at will.
Fed on celestial diet, they may see
At least the cloud that veils the Deity;
And that great Light that our humanity
Cannot endure to see, and seeing, they
May so much of the Diety portray
That coming men may know the Light that shone their day.

XIV.

Let us look backward on the Deity
By poets pictured in mythology,
As visions of a presence that they saw,
Or they conceived to see. Then we no more
Shall imperfection find, but harmony.
The vision that they saw, do we not see
Is the same vision that hath come to be?
As they upon those ships afar at sea,
Whose moistened eyes cling fondly to this shore,
Can now these frowning towers see no more,
Nor you, nor me, nor yet that cedar tree,
But a fair mountain bathed in azure bloom,
A sweet perfume of their last thought of home.

XV.

No inharmonious feature therein dwells
And all its former beauty it excels;
But we must look with incorporeal eyes
To see the hidden beauty therein lies.

XVI.

Lend me such eyes, O poet, full of peace!

XVII.

The loves of all the Gods whom they did sing
Made Gods the source from whence all love must spring.
For "God is Love," our later poets sing.
Both past and present touch a single string,
And if we call God Love, or call Him Fate,
This truth that "God is all" we inculcate.

XVIII.

Evangelist of Fate, the simile
Of men and lights progressive seems to be
Founded on truth preserved in poetry.
Open a broader vision; show to me
If dream they had of Christianity.

XIX.

The lonely cedar seemed to voice a sigh,
And, looking upward, we descried the sky
Filled with huge cumuli piled mountains high,
Like battlements, full manned, an army to defy.
The sun is taking flight, night rules the day,
And beasts and men seek shelter in dismay.
The ships along the coast and in the bay
Have dropped their sails, and, floating, helpless lay,
Awaiting what the fates may have to say.
The sea has doffed its festal blue attire,
And, robed in black, awaiteth now the ire
The storm god threatens. Sir, let us retire
For shelter from the storm about to break,
And in that southern tower our refuge take,
Climb the long stairway, and from out the light
View the four elements exert their might.

XX.

We watched in silence long the lightning play,
Saw that some force compelled its devious way
To the celestial batteries, then they,
The unchained dogs of war, broke into bay,
With simultaneous tongue, began th' affray.
Who but a God cast downward at the sea
The three-pronged fork that shone so vividly,
And with the speed of thought outran our sight,
A thing of terror though a thing of light?
A messenger so dread, who has the might
To grasp within his hand? On comes the fight!
Who but a God such mighty voice could own
As that which now in the deep thunder's tone
Commands, "Forward the whirlwind!"

XXI.

With horrid scream, like flying horses' neigh,
The clouds are rent, and, eager for the fray,
They hurl themselves upon the earth to slay,
And in their might they dreadful havoc play.
First they a volley of great hailstones wing
By superhuman tension from bowstring,
As if there should survive no living thing,
Death universal be their archers' sting.
Man, beast, tree, flower and shrub alike they smite,
"No quarter!" screams the blast, "but all things blight!"
Another foe comes rushing o'er the plain,
Olympian flood-gates now their stores of rain
In torrents empty, as though once again
By second deluge they sought to attain
Mankind's destruction. Perish earth, and reign
O'er earth entombed thou watery sovereign!
Mercy! what blinding flash and deaf'ning crash
Break simultaneously on sight and ear!
All Heaven is aflame! Sure God was near!
A heat intense the eyeballs seemed to sear,
As if the God of Sinai would appear.
Were it prolonged the twinkling of an eye,
One had no breath to yield a smothered sigh.
Ashes of ashes had been left to glean,
Like baseless fabric of life's idle dream.

XXII.

Standing in that grewsome eerie,
Midst such elemental war,
Much we marvelled that the lady
With such courage there forbore
To betray a sign of terror—
Nay, she higher yet would soar.
Suddenly she turned upon us
Those great, lustrous eyes divine.
Open now the vision promised, poet mine.

XXIII.

One needs to stand above the world to see
With incorporeal eyes the nudity
Unveiled in all its beauty from mythology.
The Christian sees a Jewish maiden fair
Standing before a window on the stair,
Bathed in the rarest sunshine, and her hair
A golden halo seems to him to wear.
Her face uplifted, like a statue there
Chiseled from out Carrara's marble rare,
She rooted stands, arrested by a vision.
As it fades away, she moves, we hear her say,
"According to Thy word"—then kneels to pray.

XXIV.

Some centuries of centuries before
By their faint lights the early poets saw
A vision much like that we now adore,
A Grecian maid to whom like words were said.
She whom God loves they also thought must be
Highest perfection of humanity,
For when perfection imperfection takes,
Creator His creation anew freights
With His great purpose, and it fecundates.
Nothing unholy in His thought can lie,
And where God is He will all sanctify.

XXV.

The Manger is the next the Christian sees.
They saw a cradle—in it, Hercules.
They saw the serpent; saw Him bruise its head;
They saw Him later also raise the dead.

XXVI.

They saw a lonely life. Why was He strong?
That He might suffer as He righted wrong?
All other mortals Him they saw excel.
He, too, they said, "descended into hell."
He ascended, and entered Heaven's portals,
There sitteth, immortal with the immortals.
God—man. How came those poets so to scan
The vision that through them has come to man?

XXVII.

Not ended is that light. It shines to-day
With constant ray from headland far away,
To the more perfect light we know to-day.
By brighter flame we read of higher force,
The force of love, that counteth all but loss
So it can triumph though upon a cross,
To spend its parting breath in fond adieu.
"Father, forgive, they know not what they do;"
I love mankind and bring them unto you.
Grant where we are, they also may be too.
Travail and toil, hunger, thirst, death, in vain
Oppose—love no defeat e'er knows.

XXVIII.

With brighter light, can we still truly say,
We comprehend our Light much more than they?
What can we even dimly hope to know?
Light so upreared upon a cross to show
Like God's own sun, the way wherein men go.
Still less of love, the supreme force that dies
To human eyes, that its beloved may rise,
By virtue of vicarious sacrifice
To find a home prepared in Paradise,
By love that went before, that in mankind
Found something so to love. Are we not blind
To the full measure of such perfect light?

XXIX.

Poet of peace, poet of pleasure,
Of oddest measure ever poet rhymed,
I will treasure all you have defined.
Entwined in my remembrance of this hour
Will abide in all its power, clear outlined,
The poetry of thought that you have wrought
Into a vision of pure light, with moral bright,
That through the ages there has shone one Light
T'wards which men crept, by which they found the way
To Him Who is the Way, the Truth, the Light.

XXX.

Think not caprice of idle woman led
Me to draw forth these thoughts. Of them, a web
Round this old tower I weave for all to see,
Clinging like ivy green in memory
Of the old keeper, Poet came to see;
Web woven to reward a Poet's constancy,
A proper guerdon fairly won. Well done,
To come a Poet's vow to pay. Too late!
In that was fate, the vow inviolate
Is kept. Fate justly will perpetuate
Such kind intent.

XXXI.

In every twinkling star that gems the night
Behold a window light, you to invite
To home of many mansions and delight.
The vital spark that animates cold clay
Warms and illumines it throughout life's brief day,
The poets said from Heaven was stol'n away.
Its origin divine proclaims that flame
Eternally survives one and the same,
And when recalled, returns to whence it came,
There to shine back on earth with loving ray,
Each soul its brightness seeking to display,
That we to them may see how short the way.

SILVIO PELLICO.



I.

One night within the moonbeams bright,
Bathing old Venice in that light
Which nowhere else can so delight
The poet, painter, lover's sight,
Past palace wall and prison bar
I and my love wandered afar,
When sweetly sounded a guitar,
Struck by a master hand.

II.

A few soft chords in minor key
Of richest, purest harmony,
And then upon the tranquil night
Rang out a human voice so sweet
As e'er the ear of man could greet,
Although an angel sang,
And thus it sung:—

III.

“Ave Maria, let my prayer,
Floating on this moonlight air,
Reach thine ear and win for me
To thy Son a word from thee,
Asking Him to look on me.

IV.

“Tell Him, by the world forgot,
I endure this cruel lot,
Waiting for the time when He
From these chains will set me free,
Who have suffered patiently.”

V.

The song was done.
And she beside me, fresh and fair,
Upon whom yet no weight of care
Had fallen, then and there,
In her soprano, rich and rare,
Sang back:—

“Chi siete voi chi cantate?”

Then, as an echo,
Soft and low,

“I am Silvio Pellico.”

VI.

And she to me, “What speaks this name?”
Why seek to know? Let the sweet song
Remain alone, nor bear along
With it the tale of cruel wrong
He suffers. Qu’ importe savoir
De l’homme qui chante la triste histoire.
No bird could sweeter song avoir,
Because we know its plume and name.
Come, tread with me, love, the grand aisle,
Where the great dead of Albion’s Isle
Are sepulchred, and muse awhile,
While I from this thy thoughts beguile.

VII.

Peace to their ashes, but I hold
That when they gave the world their song
To sing throughout the ages long,
They did themselves and lineage wrong
To make it bear their name along.
If Dante, Byron, Milton sang
Sweet songs for all the world to sing,
They did a great and glorious thing;
And yet we hear the echo ring
With all their faults and frailties.
What cares the world for him who sings,
So that the song sweet music brings,
And opens in the heart new springs,
Or lends us wings to fly to better things?

VIII.

I hold with Arthur and his knights,
With Coeur de Lion, Ivanhoe,
Newcomers will not undergo
The force renown gives to thy blow,
Where once thy blazonry they know;
And so, to find them, one must go
With new device and heraldry
To prove that higher ecstacy—
Proven superiority—
Divested of both fame and name,
No ghoul then can rake ashes dead
To spit this venom at a line,
“Hic jacet one of fancies fine
On whom his progeny recline
In mute inglorious decline.”

IX.

Men look upon their talents
As a means to wealth;
But wealth leads not to glory.
Of the earth earthy, it is foul corruption.
He who would write his impress on his time
Must doubly seal his ears,
And lash him fast to the mast
Until the Isle is past,
Lest the sweet singing of the Siren Gold
Lead him to ruin, like the kings of old.
Let me carve out a name
That comes and ends with me;
No sponsors, but its echo
As a song, sweet, clear and free,
As Pellico in chains now sings.

X.

And she, "Thy thought is selfish;
I would not have it so.
Man's thought is not alone his work;
It is the soul's bright gift of God,
Who gifts not all alike.
Hast thou not chosen me to be
The mother of thy brood? Are we
But one? If I be merged in thee,
Losing all my identity,
Still shall I live in history,
As part of thee, and to that property
Which vests in me from thee,
I claim my right perpetually,
Though nothing but a name there be,
That is a knightly legacy
That carries far. Dear lord and liege,
Thy last command, 'Noblesse oblige,'
Thy thought would work grave tort to me
Who shine by thy refulgency.
But from this subject let us go,
And tell me of this Pellico."

XI.

No, not to-night; in years to come
'Twere better, love, then to be sung;
And so one night in other clime,
I sang to her the following rhyme:—
Silvio Pellico is dead.
A clean soul meet for Heaven hath fled
And now is free, after years of captivity.

XII.

Meekly he strove his penance to fulfil,
Appointed him, he knew, by Divine will.
For some wise purpose yet unknown
To human ken, the seed that he had sown
Another harvest should have grown.

XIII.

Saluzzo rears his statue as a son,
Who bound in dungeons, still hath won
Perhaps e'en more renown than many a crown.

XIV.

On mother's breast, Bambino pats his hand
And faintly smiles. Beside her stand
Twins, older—Rosina, strong and fair;
Silvio, boy so pale and frail that there
Seems little hope that he can long abide,
For priest and doctor in this coincide,
“Too frail for earth,” and bid her be resigned
To lose the tender blossom with her life entwined.
A mother's heart loves aye most tenderly
The little one that most needs loved to be,
And now she puts the baby down, and takes upon her knee
The fading boy, whom it is grief to see
With each day fade perceptibly.
Even as she prays comes inspiration;
In those parched lips she puts great Nature's font,
To him worn out with pain.
And bids him drain, so, giving life again
And day by day she wins him back to life.

XV.

Can human heart intenser pleasure know,
After long weeks of keen anxiety,
Than is expressed in that one overflow
Of grateful tears that speak thy thanks for thee?
Thy prayers have won the victory
O'er death; the child is spared to thee.
Ah, child, so precious, what will be thy fate,
Thou so regained when at the very gate
Of death? Oh, mother, in those after years,
When time had changed the sweet to bitter tears,
Oft must thou queried if for good or ill
Had been those prayers for him.

XVI.

Stop, for the scene is solemn.
The weary months and years of agony are o'er.
"Perfide Albion's" imprisoned guest is at the door
Of death. "Josephine—the Army—France!"
Within, death's rattle ring, the beam from out the glance
Is gone, the threshold's past, and once again he's free.

XVII.

See, perched aloft, amidst the Alpine snows,
 L'armee d'Italie! Hark! What a shout uprose
 When he unfurled the flag, and said that day:—
 "Soldiers, France owes you much—can nothing pay.
 Below lays Italy—I lead the way!
 Forward, march! I'll find a way to pay!"

XVIII.

That was the Alpha and Omega of a brief career
 The world loves to call great. To us it rather would appear
 A mockery of greatness, which survives and dominates
 Of its own force and to the end of time perpetuates
 Itself, greatness, whether incarcerate or free as air.
 If we refer to him, 'tis that we may better compare
 Two prisoners of state at the same period of time,
 The nobler to accentuate the hero of our rhyme.

XIX.

The one fretted his soul in dungeon, like moth a garment,
 When forced to live within himself, 'twas bitterest torment.
 His great ambition was to shine, and had no other bent
 Than personal 'grandizement. A million lives by him spent
 Did pay the way that made his day, and later made Sedan.
 Had all the blood he spilled of France blossomed and fully flow-
 ered,

Germania ne'er had seen the day when she was found empowered
 Alsace and Lorraine to steal, with all their dot endowed.

PART II.

I.

If here, we take a plunge into the Idyllic
Mere, 'tis to narrate the fate of the angelic
Congenital associate, fair Rosina.
Sweet Sposina, who was to all carina,
But to Silvio ever Angiolina,
The alter ego in his every dream,
And of that lowly household the sunbeam.

II.

The fair Rosina weds at sweet fifteen,
And leaves the nest where nurtured she had been.
Ring out your sweetest chimes, oh, wedding bells!
Let fleecy zephyrs, as they bore Psyche,
Carry the swelling peals far out to sea,
There on some mast to break at length in glee,
The sailor boy's emotion to surprise,
Who dreams of home, and opens wide his eyes
As if celestial music of the skies
Rang in his ears. Let echoed blessings float
In every ringing note from brazen throat,
That once again the holy sacrifice
Upon love's altar burns with sweet incense.

III.

The keen maternal instinct caught alarm
At thought of rudely separating link
Of psychical connection. On the brink
Of such dilemma she soon came to think
It wise that Silvio with her should go
To Paris, and that there in time the blow
Of separation would be tempered so
No dire effect would light on Silvio.

IV.

"Thus are the purposes of Deity
Fulfilled," says Homer, where men grope blindly
There the eternal plan in embryo
Awaits its timely fruit, as we now show,
On the connate fate of the twins Pellico.
Gathered to that great city they drew apart,
She to her growing household, and he to art.

V.

If ne'er had been awakened in his soul
Ambitions by this visit to Paris
That soon became too strong for his control,
He had not won his fame so painfully.

VI.

Addio, Rosina, daughter of such mother!
May you increase and multiply, and still other
Fair daughters after you; about you ever hover
All blessings of content, good health and holy peace!
Alas, 'twould make you shudder, did you to-day know
The fate in store for your twin brother Silvio.

VII.

And farewell, mother, of a faith divine,
As homeward now thou plodd'st thy lonely way,
Feeling life's sun dwarfed by many a ray,
Leaving behind twin blossoms of thy flower;
In Heaven above serenely reigns the power
Alone can comfort now each lonely hour!

VIII.

Ah, this is true of thee, the Great Book tells,
"But little lower than the holy angels"
Art thou. Farewell, oh, mother, with sad heart!

IX.

Pellico had ambitions more sublime
Than all the others of his name and line.
He hoped to live remembered in his rhyme
And "his land's language" to the end of time.
All the world know his famous tragedy,
The oft played Francesca da Rimini.

X.

Milan was then Athens of Italy.
There none more graceful nor refined than he.
That time they formed a great society,
Stimulating educationally
From classic sleep their dearly loved country.
Patriotic conciliatore,
They styled themselves, and labored right nobly
New methods, practical machinery
To introduce, hoping prosperity
Would hail the rosy dawn of liberty
Italia, they prayed, would ere long see.

XI.

He was the friend of Byron, Shelley, and
Of all the literati in his land,
A bright and shining band, none other wand
Conjured more stirring fancies at command
Than his, and this bright flame of promise rare
Was spent, extinguished in a single hour
By Austrian tyrant's cruel power.

XII.

During his brief lifetime had arisen
Above the horizon Napoleon's star.
Thrones had been overturned; the God of War
Let loose the dogs, and soon both near and far
Chaos followed close on the triumphal car.
And when Napoleon's wondrous star grew pale,
And died from out the starry firmament,
Austria came again with full intent
To doubly bind and punish who had lent
Their might her dynasty to blight.

XIII.

Men of letters, imagine what it is
To one so qualified, with mind like his,
To write good plays and to the censor hie!
After elimination, hear reply:
"This you may publish; that part forbid I."
Or if to fancies sweet you give the rein,
From sweet Erato catch a bright refrain
You long to reproduce, to be told plain:—
"Here, if such notions you do entertain,
And try to publish, you'll incur the pain
Of my displeasure." Well, that's the measure
Applied to writers then by Austria.

XIV.

Pellico, and some hundreds more beside,
Soon felt the iron arm about them glide.
They were arrested, charged, in secret tried
As Carbonari, patriots allied.
Some to the mountain wilds fled to reside,
And there for years the tyrant's power defied.

XV.

There is no question that his sympathy
Was with his countrymen, we will agree.
They hated Austria, and with good cause.
'Tis possible, though not in evidence,
They meditated then some great offence.
This seems admitted by one brief sentence:—
“Had I been vile enough my life to buy
Another to betray, I was told I
Need not then die.”

XVI.

Let us be brief,
And turn this cruel leaf.
Condemned to die!
He hears it with a sigh,
But with no tears.
His cheek pales not with fears.
Commuted to imprisonment for twenty years
In close confinement small mercy to us appears.

XVII.

There are philosophers who love to state
Nor good nor ill exist save by compare.
Their maxim serves us here to illustrate
Two captive heroes the same date who bear
Unequally awarded lots by fate.
Peace hath her heroes no less great than war.
In minstrels' songs their names live evermore.
The one, once little, grown a Caesar great,
Making, unmaking kings, himself the State,
Now stripped of titles, friends, and country, too,
Guilty of crimes he ne'er could expiate,
And of the blood that ran at Waterloo,
Abandoned now to useless, sad repine,
Did in six years his soul to God resign.

XVIII.

The other, guiltless of the first offence,
Had harsher lot, and Austria's pretence
That he might lead his people to be free
Served its bad purpose. The crime liberty
Embraces all the others, and so he
Unjustly suffered this indignity.
He invoked manhood's strength, and not in vain;
Though in that dungeon dark he lived alone,
His soul the brighter from his trials shone.
He won the hardest vict'ry man can win,
The victory o'er self, to want nothing.

XIX.

Orpheus went to Hell, there to regain
His lost Eurydice. 'Twas all in vain.
And Dante there so often went and came
As to win fame and an eternal name.
While Milton's later graphic pictures flame
With all the lurid lights he there could frame,
And all of these do picture much the same
Array of scenes and beings which there came
And went. Flame, tortures, anguish without name,
These are examples of a poet's right,
And in like manner we you now invite
To other scenes not very far unlike.
We enter now the clouds and dim darkness;
The vapid damps, the icy chill impress
Forebodings dread. Odors fetid oppress.
You sigh for light, but here no light can come.
Here, they who live, with use of light are done.
You breathe the noxious vapors of despair.
Here the crushed heart and outraged manhood die,
Rejoicing from such life they may so fly.
By day, a never ending, new regret;
By night, such horrid dreams its glooms beget,
You wake and shriek for help, no answer get.
See, there's a figure sitting there so low,
Chained to the wall! 'Tis Silvio Pellico.
But hark! that marv'lous voice
Breaks into song so choice
The grim walls echo and again
That sweet, sad strain, it to retain
Like sunbeam rare
Perpetually there.

XX.

"Are not five sparrows for two farthings sold?"
If He Who notes their fall still me uphold
Why should I then repine?
Am I not dearer far
Than many sparrows are
To Him Who bides with me?
Calm and serene, my soul shall dominate
Ev'ry surrounding and all ills of fate,
And if He call me to Him soon or late,
His raptures to enjoy, that blessed state
Where raptures are, why need I wait
My gratitude to sing?
Beneath that all protecting wing I nothing lack.

XXI.

Joy thrives on joy, as sorrow feeds on sorrow.
Count all as gain and think not of to-morrow.
All the years are but to-day;
Sing, then, sweetly while you may.
You may cheer some heart that's drear
From oft repining.

XXII.

After ten years of holy constancy
They oped the prison door and set him free.
He knew not if his parents still survived,
But soon that point he fully satisfied,
And hastening day by day his homeward way,
He came again that weary head to lay
Upon his white-haired mother's breast, and say,
All choked with sighs and tears,
"Thank God! Once more
Thy blessing I implore."
And those dear hands are raised
To bless a white-haired broken man,
Her boy, her joy.

XXIII.

Once more he took his pen. Ah, then
All Europe paid the homage of its tears,
At his recital of those cruel years
Passed in "Le mie prigioni."

*To His Excellency, Levi P. Morton, Governor of the State
of New York:*

Excelsior:—

A poet clothes with imagery his thought,
And from his casement, like Noah's dove, it flies
Upon the wings of fate, with purpose fraught:

The thought lives on—alas! the poet dies.

Unlike the dove, it by no instinct taught,

Still lodgment finds, and cometh not again
To tell its author by green token brought,

His faith hath triumphed, earth doth still retain
The seed implanted; that its flower will reign.

We launch to-day our charming Prima Donna,

If in the ways of fate she meet Your Honor,

Perchance to you she'll prove a worthy donor

Of good advice. Preaching's an easy trade,

This is the first that ever she essayed;

Leave her the hope she not too long delayed,

For unto this, you must subscribe, we know,

“Se non e vero, e ben trovato.”

LA PRIMA DONNA.



I.

Madame sits in her sunny boudoir,
Clad in a soft, rose-tinted peignoir,
Fanning herself with a lace mouchoir,
Humming sweet airs from *Il Trovator*.
Idly she glances along the shore
Where the white foam breaks forevermore.
Marie, the maid, sewing by the door,
Mends a small rent made the night before
In the costly brocade Madame wore.
L'enfant terrible rolls on the floor,
Just now, an exasperating bore.
The vandal deliberately tore
That instant a book of ancient lore,
Which time or money cannot restore.

II.

Is Madame wife, widow, or divorcee?
Excuse us, we really cannot say.
It matters not greatly, anyway.
She only moved in the other day,
Paid one month's rent, gave security,
What more could landlord ask properly?

III.

Society takes what comes to-day,
Provided the purse for all can pay,
And one lives in a swell sort of way.
Though she be perilous as she is fair,
And every charm is filled with venom there,
We must confess her ways bewitching are.

IV.

Madame is an actress, a star,
Of galaxy histrionic.
If she beam on you from afar,
Call up at once your Platonic
Reserve force of philosophy,
Lest otherwise lost you may be.
This Milky Way embryonic
Is of things not astronomic.
In the boundless expanse "starry"
Men are lost much more frequently
Than in the waters of earth's sea.
For in those spheres are satellites
With horns—Great and Little Bear—there;
Crabs and Scorpions are Zodiac lights.

V.

In your youth—fear not, we're discreet,
And shall not enquire when was that—
You regarded Blue Beard as a treat,
Retreated quite often and sat
In horrors entranced. This advanced
Age prefers something new and quite true.
Such fables no longer will do for the savants of 1892.
And this charming picture we paint to you,
Comprenez-vous? is positively true
To the life.

VI.

You are now at West End by the Sea,
Where the breakers come rolling ashore,
And the "stars" from every hostelry
Come daily for their bath about four.
They Neptune implore charms to restore
That the winter's dissipation wore
Down so fine only time and the brine
Can again enshrine.

VII.

They heed not a known precept divine,
"Make clean first the inside every time."
They wash for a whole month at the sea,
Then to Saratoga they all flee,
The inside to wash as thoroughly.
So they be clean without and within,
We assume they'll be pardoned the small sin
Of reversing the order of cleansing.

VIII.

Just now Madame wears a slight frown—
Some thought won't, at her bidding, down.
A rebellious mental compound
Deranges that peace so profound,
With her habitually found.

IX.

A little knock this peaceful scene disturbs.
The curious child's impatience soon she curbs,
Then bids Marie the robe to lay aside,
And to attend the door, that on its slide
Is softly opened, just a little way.
There is brought in upon a silver tray
A card announcing Professor Toschay.
"Bid him await. I'll descend presently.
Quickly, Marie, attire me! I now see
My sea bath to-day omitted must be."

X.

When Madame descended, all equipped,
Marie, in reverie profound dipt,
"I wonder why Monsieur's here to-day?
She did not expect him. I dare say
He wants some money. What mystery
Hangs over these people I will see."
Madame assumes an air of plaisanterie:—

XI.

"Bon jour, Professor, welcome to the sea!
So glad you came. Your name that instant we
Had just pronounced. You will remain to dine?"
"To-day, excusez-moi. I have but time
To speak a word, which you, of course, divine."

XII.

"How much, my dear Professor, want you now?"
"Five hundred dollars I must have, somehow!
You are aware my studies in science
Can only be maintained at great expense."
"Perhaps a few days hence I'll send the cheque;
To-day, my bank account's a perfect wreck."
"Give me the cheque; I'll hold it for some days."
And here he smiled—"I keep my word, always."
And Madame gives the cheque; she knows it pays
To have a scientist knowing her ways.

XIII.

When the Professor had the cheque secure,
He said to her, "I am not now quite sure
But that I, for some days may be called hence,
And as a necessary consequence
I must give you some lessons. Let us hence
To your library repair: being there
I will explain some detail of the care
That you must exercise as to the air,
The change of light, that must not be too bright.
Till my return, you all this work must do—
You'll find it interesting, something new.
Go in"—he opes the door—"I follow you."
And there we leave them, as is right to do,
When doctors come patients to interview.

XIV.

Alas! Some people are born curious,
And like to know what other people do;
Marie now undertakes a new opus,
And to the keyhole very closely drew.
We hope no one could say such thing of you.
But our Professor was an able man,
And 'gainst each chance he found a proper plan.
To her chagrin there hear she nothing can.
We can imagine that the purpose ran
Quick through her head that chamber to explore
Some other time, like Bluebeard's wife of yore.

XV.

“Goodby, Professor.” ’Twas their last goodby,
Albeit they knew it not, and neither’s eye
Betokened more emotion than do we
Parting from friends we ne’er again shall see.
We knew a man, a loving father, too,
A few days since, as men at morning do,
Kissed his dear wife, and started for the train,
Yet in ten minutes was brought home again;
But nevermore those lips will say goodby—
Papa and husband dead before them lay.
Still mem’ry holds those loving tones so sweet,
In truest echo—they each day repeat
That last goodby.

XVI.

That evening Madame’s visitors were numerous—
Actors and actresses, merchants, jeunesse doree,
And many social nondescripts, notorious,
Excelled the lily of the field in fine array.
Madame, supremely pleased, was everywhere, intent
That no one aught should lack who was on pleasure bent.
So games of cards for money, dance and song and wine
Insured apparently to all a golden time.
As Madame passed an open door, she on the stair
Caught sight of Marie. Not a word spoken was there,
But just a lifting of Marie’s eyebrows explained
That something was amiss. Her room she quickly gained.

XVII.

"Alas! Madame, there in your library,
I hear a noise as one who groans! Come! See!"
Much as the cannon's roar at Brunswick's ball,
'Midst sound of revelry, turned "cheeks all pale
That but an hour before" weren't pale at all,
So these few words made Madame's courage quail,
But she was thoroughbred, and did not fail:
"There's no one there to groan. Don't be absurd!
And even though you fifty groans had heard,
What's that to you? Are you afraid of groans,
Or moans, or tones sepulchral?"

XVIII.

"Ah, oui, Madame, j'ai peur!
But please do not infer
You can so easily deceive me:
It was the young man groaned
As through that room I roamed;
His groan appealed to me for pity."

XIX.

Ah, the dark eye of woman! How it can flash!
(When she is smarting beneath some fury's lash)
And show the venom of the thought behind,
A sort of thunderbolt forged and meant to crash
(Jupiter pictured by the Grecian mind).
And Madame's flashed their very bitterest
Then on the maid, who her so oft undressed.

XX.

He was a great philosopher who said,
"No man can hero be to his valet."
Madame to maid is just as applique;
Besides, Marie was French all the way
Through, and knew a thing or two.

XXI.

"Well, what is it that you wish?"
"I wish to know what mean those sleeping men,
Lying like mummies in Egyptian crypt?"
"Wait till the guests are gone, and then
I will enlighten you," and off she skipt.

XXII.

And now, I pray you, hear Madame's story.
It isn't gory as Bluebeard's appears;
Its scientific interest asks no fears,
As did that other tale in early years;
Yet it may be that some it move to tears
Whose lids these many years no tears have shed.

XXIII.

"Entrez, Marie." She opened wide the door.
"You see," and here her voice did modulate,
"These were my admirers importunate,
Save one, and him I love; he loves not me."
Here Marie thought, "I'll surely set him free!"

XXIV.

"I have discovered one may spend in sleep
One-half his life, and still his life prolong.
One-third our lives, says Byron in his song,
The av'rage man must sleep, or right or wrong.
For six months at a time man can resign
Himself to sleep, and nothing suffer there.
Nay, any invalid can so repair
The diseased tissues hurt by constant wear
That when he wakes, he walks again as fair
As when in youth's bright day he trod the air,
Reluctant then to walk like older men,
His happiest power to run and run again.
All that is needed is the best of care,
Constant attention, warmth, no noise, fresh air,
Four times a day be turned on either side,
As mothers turn their sleeping infant pride.
Three times a day with proper food supplied
By inhalation—some savory stew
With incense served I find the best will do.
I but experiment; some day I may
Propose to Governments to do away
Capital punishment, and so essay
'By sleep to knit the ravelled sleeve of' crime,
And prove the benefactress of my time."

XXV.

“Madame, your dream’s sublime!”

XXVI.

“Of course, no good to man comes save through ills,
These men, I wrong, perhaps, in that their wills
Are mine; but then the world will surely gain
Greater advantage from their trifling pain.
Think what a joy to triumph o’er suspense
And wake to know the issue six months hence,
All that consuming anguish overcome,
Which every year so many souls has wrung.
If I have not the ‘omnia cura’ found,
At least, the major part of ills I’ve bound
Within the fast embrace of Morpheus.”

XXVII.

“Observe, now, number one. This quite old man
With florid cheek, and hair and beard so white,
He dotes on me, calls me his soul’s delight.
He lives on an annuity which he
Draws from a bank semi-annually.
The last he drew he lost at cards with me:
I could not cruel be, and so you see.
In kindness here, I tend him carefully:
He neither minds his loss, nor knows a care,
So long as I can keep him quiet there.

XXVIII.

And number two—observe, he is an heir
To a large fortune, which he gets when he
Shortly attains his full majority;
He has a fair allowance, still you see,
Not quite enough for our duality,
And sleep costs little comparatively.

XXIX.

Here you perceive a graceful actress, too.
She interfered with me. What could I do,
Until I thought the knotty problem out,
But take good care she didn't spy about?
And all these others are contributors
To science and to me, who for its cause
Have undertaken such experiment:
"Now, Marie, if it suits you, stay with me,
And I will pay much more liberally."

XXX.

"Ah there, Madame, we certes shall agree!
I surely will attain proficiency
To such degree, you'll leave with me the key.
Yet, e'er we leave the room, this fair young man
With auburn hair, and this blond beard—who can
Imagine fairer man than he there be?
Tell me, I pray you, who is he?"
"He is a college athlete, pure and true,
A noble man as breath of life e'er drew.
I keep him here awhile for fear he woo
Some other lady, as men are wont to do."

XXXI.

Extravaganza, say you? Pas de tout!
The picture's true to life; we'll prove it, too.
Are there no lives within your mem'ry's span,
Can point a moral and adorn this tale?
Know you no wrecks that on these breakers ran,
And on life's beach, like driftwood, now bewail
The wreck of manhood, virtue, health, fair fame,
Without a home, and bearing disgraced name?

XXXII.

How many moons have waned since we all read
Of a young banker in backyard found dead,
Who from like sleep, had fallen to the ground,
The sleep that woman's coils about him bound,
While but a few blocks off, a family rare,
A lovely wife and children in despair!

XXXIII.

The strongest man was shorn of strength in sleep,
Delilah's beauty chained him as complete
As Madame's sleepers, whom Marie now tends
With feather duster, and above them bends
To see there be no symptom of extremity.

XXXIV.

Like Mother Eve, Marie was curious,
And quickly took a plan, quite devious
To that prescribed for treatment of the youth.
She turned him round and round again so oft
One day, that first he sneezed, and then he coughed.
She then a little water on him threw,
Which, for awhile, did really bring him to.
He murm'd, "Where am I, and who are you?"
"Why, I'm the princess sent to set you free.
Pray keep awake, and you shall fly with me."
And then she told him she would save his life
If he would later take her for his wife.
That was the way in olden time knights paid
Like courtesy to many a Moorish maid.

XXXV.

Madame is rich; she has retired
From science, and now stands attired
Before the footlights, her farewell to make.
Grown too stout, her voice a trifle thinner,
Must in those trills its constant refuge take,
Which spoils her reputation as a singer.
That reputation she has chiefly prized,
And now awakes at last to find despised.
Still tragedy or comedy, she may
Venture a year or two longer to play;
She knows full well that she "has had her day."
There's something pitiful in such decay!
Listen, she speaks:—

XXXVI.

“Pray, one and all, in these, my parting words,
To find some substance from these shadows past,
You’ll never hear again the singing birds
That nested on your porch the summer past,
And yet you know they lived, and loved and sang,
All for some purpose in the Divine plan,
And it may be some purpose in me ran.
If my experiments to you seem cruel,
Let me heap on your head this little fuel,
Not “burning coals,” but an electric spark;
It may be then, that purpose you will mark.

XXXVII.

“Society each year puts men to death,
Whose lives are forfeited to outraged law,
Put them to sleep—and keep that fleeting breath,
For the wise purpose, so to learn the more
How sleep the vital forces can restore.
You surely won’t refuse so slight request:
’Twould gild your names when you are gone to rest.
Think of the horrors they immured endure,
Who wait electrocution as their cure.
Sweep from the earth such barbarous device,
And substitute ‘death’s image’ at less price.”

XXXVIII.

I, of my sleepers, took the best of care;
Your sleepers, ere they sleep, couch in despair.
My sleepers wake; some trifles they deplore:
Your sleepers from their sleep wake nevermore.
You close a life that you cannot restore,
A crimson stain where all was white before.

XXXIX.

A speculative scientist may try
Experiments that others would desery.
The end, the means, some say, will justify.
The love of science and the need of cash
Spur men to measures that sometimes abash.
He who knows neither science nor sore need,
No such temptation in defence can plead.
What can he plead who takes a life away,
That the Creator breathed into our clay,
When, by a word, retain that life he may;
And when no earthly power can say him nay?
Lex talionis was the law of force,
The force of love exceeds, and no remorse
Attends its exercise. To its resource
'Twere wise to have recourse.

XL.

When critics merciless unbury dead,
Upon the wings of fame, their names to spread,
Were it not better that our acts should shed,
Like an old trunk our dead have packed away,
That being opened, yields the perfume they
By a few roses therein thought to lay;
A perfume that recalls but gentleness
And hands all readiness to aid distress.

XLI.

That great tragedienne, Duse, did say,
"My life is naught to you; you simply pay
To see and hear emotions I portray,
Or to admire the toilettes I display."
I quote that fair authority to you,
Mesdames, Messieurs, and bid you all adieu.
When Asrael's wing,
Its shadow fling
O'er me, maybe,
This scientific lay
Some day will come in play.

MY FIRST CASE,



I.

The bewitching beauty Sylvia
Gave me that last Polka Redowa,
Closing the season at Mardi Gras,
Balls, theatres, parties, opera.

II.

All the grand rounds of our select set,
Creme de la Creme, McAllister's get,
We had made, were not fatigue yet;
Had danced the whole length of Murray Hill,
At the Astors' balls, Jacob and Will;
Fashion now cried, Halt! and said, Be still!
Cover with ashes the season's sin,
Farewell to meat, repentance begin.

III.

Our hands entwined, my right round her waist,
The opportune moment I embraced.
Whisp'ring low, Should we dance nevermore?
That thought breeds others unknown before.
I love you! I love you! What to do
Without you, how shall I Lent put through?
Oh! promise me, love, e'er we do part,
To share the life troubles of this heart!

IV.

"That's a sweet little speech, I demur,
Neat way to express 'affaire du coeur';
But don't you think it a trifle bold,
O, briefless lawyer, devoid of gold,
To make to the maid you now enfold?"

V.

Though smiling, a new tone I could trace;
You see, I have now, Miss, my first case.

VI.

"Be brief, sir, then, let me hear the plea;
I will both court and the jury be."
You are, too, plaintiff, though 'tis I sue;
And, defendant, your love I pursue;
All my existence centres in you.

VII.

May it please the Court, then, in an action at law,
The case goes by precedent 'stablished of yore;
Men are born; they die. Some marry each day,
The fates of humanity; listen, pray,
If earth were without any gold to-day,
Men would still marry in the usual way.
Why, then, should not we?

VIII.

“Jack! Are you now speaking seriously?”
Never more so, Sylvia. Answer me.
The Court, very gently:—“Let counsel go hence.
I will send this case out for a reference.”
So be it, Your Honor, although it seems hard.
(Here she gave me her own father’s business card.)
Parting, she gave me her hand to kiss;
That was my first conception of bliss!

IX.

I called at his office the next day.
Quiet reigned, in an old foggy way,
The clerks moved along, all old and gray,
In a perfunctory sort of way.
They need some new blood here, I can see,
And all the world would agree with me.
I sent my card in; was told to wait.
Some clients came in, old and sedate.
There was nothing youthful there, save me;
I waited an hour impatiently.

X.

But all comes to him “qui sait attendre.”
Would my talent equal the demand?
There are moments crucial in life,
When one must win or die in the strife!
Just such a moment had come to me;
Ne’er was I cooler or more cheeky.

XI.

"The business, sir?" he inquired of me.
A reference case, as you shall see.
Your name versus mine, from Miss Sylvie.
I handed the card given to me.

XII.

"Proceed with the case immediately."

XIII.

The argument in the court below
Refers to a contract, and you know
That Blackstone, Coke and Kent all agree
To give a contract validity
Consent of all parties there must be.

XIV.

In the case in point, there's a minor heir;
The natural guardian, sir, you are.
If you please, the reference is sent
To obtain the guardian's consent,
The contract being matrimony.
He smiled, and listened quite patiently.

XV.

Of this contract, the essence, I fear,
The consideration may appear.
Had I the pennello of Angelo,
The matchless colors of Tintoretto,
The genius of Raphaele, still I know
The worth of the object I could not show,
So beyond all price is this pearl so rare,
I truly would give all I own to share,
As the great Master tells about elsewhere.
No consideration could be too dear,
But such as I have, sir, you now shall hear.

XVI.

At this point an interruption came.
An entire stranger, calling my name,
Burst into the room, showing my card,
And, though I felt it was very hard
To meet interruption so ill starred
(In Italian he inquired for me),
I asked in Italian who was he
Thus so unceremoniously
Intruded himself there upon me.
He burst into tears. "Please, sir, you see,
You only can save me! Come quickly!
I am lately come from Italy."
His wife was gone with all his money.

XVII.

The pater, learning the case, told me,
"Your case adjourned till evening will be."
I saw that fate smiled propitiously,
And set forth at once, with some degree
Of interest in Il Signore.

XVIII.

In one of Jack's letters he wrote me that he
Had discovered a waiter who used to be
Our own preferred garcon chez Filippini,
Then passing as nobleman at Napoli,
And paying his court most assiduously
To the young wife of the old Count Pizini.

XIX.

So he told the old Count that man was a fraud,
Who told his wife, which enraged her; tears outpoured.
That very day would she quit both bed and board;
He was a wicked, jealous, tyrannical lord;
She would never consent to be so annoyed!
Till the loving old man knelt down and implored
A kiss and forgiveness from her so adored.
Jack was ecarte from their visitors' list.
He vowed ne'er again to play philanthropist.
I had always told Jack he lacked savoir faire,
And he had confessed it was manifest there.
So it came to my mind, descending the stair,
That Jack's story was linked with this sad affair.

XX.

Quite late in the evening I called on Sylvie,
Who, with true feminine curiosity:—
“Jack! I’m dying to hear that little story.”
I, too, am impatient to learn of my fate.
I fancy it better, my love, you should wait
Till I learn from your father what is the state
Of affairs. “Oh, Jack, that’s all right; it is true
Papa has consented that I may wed you—
At least, he thinks, in a year or two,
We may venture to marry, if you
Think it then wise for us so to do.”
New obligations and rights accrue
To each new status, and here I threw
My arms about her, and kissed her, too,
Just in the style prescribed by Dante,
“Su la bocca tutto tremante.”

XXI.

Sylvia, daughter of Eve, all our kind
Are as one, and to our fate we go blind,
As Eva to Adam was assigned
By pity of the Eternal Mind.
So we the infinite love will bind
From our natures and lineage combined
To produce a being long designed
To appear when the day and the hour
Shall call for the force of such power.
Still we, love, yet we know not the why.
Let us, then, in our lives, only try
To look up to Olympus and say,
Not our wills, but Thine we obey.
“Why, Jack, that’s three sermons I to-day
Have heard.” Here pater made his entree.

XXII.

“Did you succeed with your case to-day?”
He inquired in a fatherly way.
I won, to be sure, and have my fee.
“Then, sir, you may also have Sylvie.”
I bowed my head and said, laughingly,
Two fees in one day one gets rarely.
I will cherish this fee tenderly.

XXIII.

“Jack! Tell us that wonderful story!”

XXIV.

So be it. I agree with Sydney,
Who summed up life proverbially:—
“Fate cannot harm me; I have dined to-day.”
My first care was his stomach to stay.
Reaching the curb, I called a coupe,
Drove to a restaurant on Broadway,
Where they feed you well, yet make you pay.
An old waiter, used to serving me,
Pulled back a chair, pointing politely
To my favorite locality.

XXV.

Huitres, Sauterne, filet, champignons,
Cafe noir, cognac, give force to one
To undertake greatest deeds upon.
I felt the battle was surely won,
And, pushing the chair back, said, “Charlie,”
Giving him the customary fee,
“Whatever became of Giovanni,
Who years ago used to wait on me?”
“I saw him last night, sir. To-day he
Sails for Europe at three on the Spree.”

XXVI.

“Is he, then, a great capitalist,
To roam abroad as a grand tourist?
The only reply vouchsafed to me
Was that shrug of the shoulders so Frenchy.

XXVII.

Drive to the Spree, I said to cabby.
Better cross by ferry at Barclay.
I had caught a clew I thought would hold.
The rascal was playing game so bold,
Madame had agreed the night before
Churches and sights with him to explore.
Early that morning he called for her.
She went without the slightest demur.
While at the Cathedral he bethought
Of a matter of business; he ought
Really instantly there to repair;
Would Madame kindly await him there?

XXVIII.

Madame waited two hours; meanwhile he
Had driven quickly her maid to see,
Telling her Madame had sent for her;
She must take the carriage instanter.
The driver he ordered to the Park.
He paid his bill for the little lark.
Then he stole everything he found there,
And took himself off for parts elsewhere.

XXIX.

The Count at such an hour had returned.
Imagine the emotions that burned
Within that old man's breast, when it learned
Itself abandoned, robbed—aye, worse, spurned
By its own idol. Rage and grief came,
Each a flame, to dye that face with shame,
Until it seemed the gorg'd veins would melt
With their hot stream that like lava felt.
Anglo-Saxon blood, like falcon, trained
To dominate passions once arraigned,
Can little know th' Italian phrensy,
Leaping to living flame instantly,
Like spark to powder mine—in one blow
Changing joyous life to endless woe.

XXX.

It was no easy task to undertake
A wronged volcano's energy to slake.
The victim with the rogue his peace to make.
By two strong Irishmen to keep the peace
My characters I now had to increase.
The Count I put upon the steamer's deck,
While I remained below at once to check
The chance encounter of a broken neck.
Nor long to wait. Giovanni soon appeared,
Two heavy satchels, and so further geared
With wraps and canes, he fell an easy prey,
As by one wrench I caught the bags away,
And, smiling, said, "You used to wait on me;
'Tis fitting now you should be served by me."
I up the gangplank quickly led the way.
Just then he saw the Count; mine was the day.
But now the Irishmen came into play;
They held the Count, preventing any fray.

XXXI.

It is an interesting sight to see
Man moved to rage, if impotent to harm.
How Godlike now, mighty with energy,
That brow, a moment since insipid, calm,
The heaving chest, the nostrils' subtle play.
Who dreamed such active muscles dormant lay
Hidden, until, as now, called to portray
The inner self, which in emergency
Assumes control and shows what man might be?
How head and face and neck now ruddy glow,
And every vein stands out with its full flow
Of nature's current. Could man remain so
One day of life would equal ages slow
Of that half torpid flow we daily know.
So close we now the scene with this tableau.

XXXII.

All was recovered, jewels and money.
Giovanni, all confess'd, was let go free.
You are invited to assist with me
Now at a scene between i congiugi,
In which some human passion you shall see.

XXXIII.

Ring up the curtain.
Beauty in tears appears.
You may be certain,
Compromised, self-despised,
A little hell within
She bore of keenest sting,
And yet no carnal sin
Had soiled Madame.

XXXIV.

“What will he say? That I have thrown away
My love upon a wretch? Misera me!
Why could I not obey and walk the way
In which his tender love for me desired?
Can he respect her who could not detect
The ‘kitchen knave’ from true nobility,
And even longed for such society?”
Though he could pardon me, myself cannot.
Henceforth, surely must be some other lot,
Wherein reminder of so foul a blot
Shall never come. Ah! woe is me! Undone!
Farewell, oh, home! No home remains, I see,
But some dull cell within a nunnery!”

XXXV.

A moment later we had been too late,
But now the Providence which is called fate
Ordained that we should enter at the door.
Be ours the power here sweet peace to restore.
Observe the glance that passes 'tween the pair.
"And who is this intruder here, you bear,
Me to humiliate? Signor, take care.
Goad not the wounded beast within its lair!"

XXXVI.

"Signora, I, your husband's counsel, friend,
Entreat you, hear me briefly. In the end
I hope this matter properly to mend."

XXXVII.

"Mend what you please, sir. Talk you not to me,"
And here she bore herself with dignity.

XXXVIII.

"Signora, as a Medico, I see
Grave wounds require desperate remedy;
And I will flinch not now from my duty."

XXXIX.

"You and your duty, sir, are naught to me.
Begone, or let me pass, sir, instantly,
If gentleman perhaps you claim to be."

XL.

“Go certainly; but first let me restore
These jewels and this letter. Nevermore
Giovanni’s letters are you like to see.
Here, too, is his confession, left with me
Before we wished him “Bon voyage” at three.
He has explained he purposed robbery,
And left you at a church quite suddenly.
A most accomplished rascal, as you see.
A rivederci!

XLI.

A perfect actress at such pass would faint,
And so did la Contessa. Like a saint
She looked, so fair. Madonna’s face
Forever conquers man. That heavenly grace
Which sits on woman’s brow still speaks our race
But little lower than the angels made.
In that by love it is so easy swayed.
It with the Count’s resolve sad havoc played,
And, stooping there, besought her he with tears
To live for him henceforth, to have no fears,
Only to be his sunshine and delight.
She should go where she pleased, with whom she liked,
And as those lovely orbs slowly unveiled,
Fanning desire, and all his joy regaled,
He seemed a happy child, and love prevailed.
There in the lap of age we leave beauty.
He had his idol, I a handsome fee.

XLII.

“Well, Jack, that’s quite a romance for one day.
Can’t you adorn it with a moral, pray?”
Why, yes, I’ll coin a new one right away:—
The tip you give to the waiter to-day,
Like bread on the water, may you repay,
At some other time, in some other way.

XLIII.

On the longest day in the month of June
Sylvia and I were married at noon.
The sun shed upon us his hottest ray;
From meadows the perfume of new-mown hay
The zephyrs bore us, their tribute to pay.
The birds in the trees their melodies sang,
And the insect world all the changes rang
In grand diapason’s octave grave,
And the white robed priest his blessing gave
To this venturesome youth and trusting maid,
Who to the universe their bow made.

REVERY.

Like footprints on the beach of time,
We leave behind us here in rhyme
Scenes from the passing show revealed,
Within which there may be concealed
Some pleasing thoughts for him who strays
Along this beach in sunny days,
And sees the ships, clouds, sea, we saw,
With like delight; hears the same roar
That echoes here for evermore.
If our impress, for lack of weight,
The winds and waves obliterate,
That still is but the common fate,
And we shall not stand isolate.
For genius by itself must stalk,
And it were better far to walk
With those we love, and share their fate,
Than to survive in lonely state,
Indelible and venerate.



VITTORIA MATTEI.

There is an apple woman on Broadway;
In storm or sunshine, see her there you may,
Winter or summer, each and every day;
Contented with her lot, she passes life away.

Her little commerce makes but small display,
Although she strives her best it to array
Temptingly bright, right in the urchins' way.
Years since her hair had turned to silv'ry gray,
Still ample braids upon her forehead lay
(As pretty hair as ever see you may).

No trace of care her features e'er betray.
Few wrinkles are there on that placid face.
Her figure, shrunk, preserves still girlish grace.
The busy crowds push by with rapid pace,
Unmindful of the goddess of the place.
But we, who see with poet's eye, oft trace,
Her lips are moving in a silent prayer,
Her fingers o'er her beads company bear
To fix her mind where such distractions are.

About her marble palaces are reared,
Luxury, comforts, clerks and merchants share.
She in the wintry blasts alone, uncheered,
Sits through the day and warms herself in prayer.
Let us endeavor such a prayer to frame
And all her blessings properly to name.

“I thank Thee, Lord, for this cold winter’s day,
That I may sit and pray in silence here;
My heart from envy of a fire may stay,
And thank Thee, Lord, that Thou my prayer wilt hear.
Let me not covet that sweet lady’s furs,
Nor that warm overcoat the banker wears.
Perhaps my life may be as fair as hers
When in eternity the Judge compares.
How sweet the prayer that lady offers Thee
For all her blessings to Thine ear must be!
Ah me! I fear my importunity
With constant litany may weary Thee!
That I am little I do not repine;
Thou, for Thy purpose, hast ordained my lot.
Perhaps some contrasts Thou wouldst here combine
Require that I should occupy this spot.

If, like Stylites on his pillar bound,
'Midst crowds unstable, stable I am found,
With chattering teeth to-day, anon in rain,
In heat, in sleet, each season these repeat,
These are no longer pain, but my great gain.
Ah! let me pillow on Thy bosom sweet
This poor old head, and thank Thee that I find
The hearts compassionate that are so kind,
Upon these steps permit my little trade;
Be their great pity by these thanks repaid.
If in these lofty palaces there be
Or rich or proud who ne'er give thanks to Thee
For all Thy mercies showered so lavishly,
Perchance the thanks of one who never knew
Such blessings, offered in their name and lieu,
May lead Thee on, their blessings to renew.
If so, I thank Thee now. Pardon them, too.
My only wish is that Thou hold me fast.
Ah, thanks! Here is a customer at last!"

One morn, when in the snow deep on the ground,
We saw her sitting there, with a profound
Compassion and respect we bowed to her,
As to a saint of God we would aver
That we delighted reverence to do
To one keeping their watch so holy true.
She smiled and bowed, and ever after we
Greeted each other as we met daily.
One day we asked her name—Vittoria—
And as we moved away.
A voice within did say,
“Thanks be to God, who giveth victory.”

Alas! this picture shortly will portray
Old age and beauty that have passed away,
And then this print, these lines alone, will be
All that remains to mark a memory
Of a sweet life in stony soil that grew
To the perfection we would keep in view,
Though in its passing it privations knew.
As one who takes delight in botany
Culls to preserve rare specimens that he
In his delightful rambles sometimes sees,
We cull this flower of the humanities,
That in the garden of our memories
We from its seed may grow humility,
The rarest virtue of our century.

GREED VERSUS FIGURES.

An Historical Legal Decision Reported in Ockley's
History of the Saracens.

On the desert, so they say,
In an age long passed away,
Met three travellers one day,
Quite in "Ben Hur's" opening way.
By a well then sat down they,
And to dine did they essay.

One had five loaves; one had three;
But the third man, none had he;
So they shared for charity;
And they fared alike, all three.
A good appetite gives taste
Unto all before it placed.
So they laughed and talked, and ate
Till naught remained on the plate.

Up to this point, all were friends;
When the third man, as amends
For their goodness, o'er them bends,
And of gold laid pieces eight
On the plate, and, quite elate,
Went his way at rapid gait.

"I will take one-half," said A.

B replied:—"I tell thee nay;

As the loaves were five and three,

Let the cash divided be."

And, since they could not agree,

To the court went angrily.

Thus a question of money

Often breaks all harmony.

First the plaintiff's case was heard,

Claiming half should be conferred

Upon him who half had given

Out of love for man and heaven.

The defendant then replied

That he had the most supplied,

And he would be satisfied

Only with a just divide.

Then the court with dignity

Hem'd, and said that there would be

An adjournment until three.

When again in places all,

And the crier's "Oyez" call

Had re-echoed through the hall,

The learned judge arose and said

He the papers o'er had read,

And that all the equity

Favored B, as you will see.

The decision then is given;

A takes one piece, B takes seven.

Eight loaves we'll divide in thirds,
Making twenty-four, in words.
Each eats eight of such divisions;
Then what part of the provisions
Furnished each? On these conditions
Plaintiff furnished pieces nine,
Eight of which to him assign;
Therefore, let him one piece take.
The defendant's five loaves make
Fifteen pieces, of which eight
Himself ate—we calculate—
Leaving seven to charity.
Clearly, then, in equity
Seven pieces his should be.
Justice Ali, fourth Caliph of Araby.
Let the costs deducted be
Now proportionately.

To the credit of that court
Be it said, as it ought,
That decision still holds good.

Justice here, you plainly see,
Is a rare commodity;
And, as happens frequently,
When you get it you may be
Disappointed wofully.
Even if you win your case,
There's a bill of costs to face.
Put your heads together, man,
And settle it as best you can.

MINERVA.

My little daughter looks at me,
An open book upon her knee.
And asks, perplexed, inquiringly,
“Papa, is ’t not absurdity
Here in the old mythology
To say Minerva, full armed, sprang
From the great brain of Jove when rang
Old Vulcan’s axe’s stroke thereon?”

“Dear heart, by fable, they would say
That wisdom came from God that way,
Having no youth, with Him alway
It was, it is, ever will be,
His token of priority.
Without it He would cease to be almighty.”

Within those soft eyes shone surprise,
As when one sees before him rise
Treasure of a new-found pleasure.
“Thank you, papa, that makes it plain
That He who wisest is must reign
As King of kings, and God of gods.”

One further lesson is conveyed
Within that fable, little maid—
That man gets wisdom through hard knocks;
The blow experience deals oft shocks
The head, the heart, the pocket, too;
Who soonest learns hath least to rue.
Therefore, the fable is quite true.
In that these truths it teaches you.

PIOTINA DI TRAIANO IN CRISTALLO DI MONTE



Nel museo del Signor Mario Piccolomini in Roma.

PLOTINA.

It is a joy, turning some time stained page,
To light upon a noble countenance,
Preserved by chance that they of later age
May by the magic of a single glance
Be won to read the story of a heart
That on life's stage once played a noble part;
To us objective lessons such impart.

Let all who view this ancient signet ring
Aspire to gain from it some pleasing thought;
And, giving rein to fancy while musing,
Plotina seek to know, and what she wrought.

'Tis sure she had her fortunes in her face;
Who looks on her, imperial majesty
Will see stamped on her brow, and queenly grace
Speaks in each feature of a noble race,
Her lineage. She an Emp'ror's nuptial bed
Did share, and yet no child did bear
Upon his throne to sit, he being dead.
Seemeth it cruel great souls to deny
Perpetuation of a noble seed?
Washington will such cross exemplify.
Such fates the gods allot, we know not why.

"Pater Patriae," he came to be known,
And she as "Mater" to the poor of Rome.
Mindful of others' griefs, they lost their own.
"In that fierce light that beats upon a throne,"
Wise, chaste and modest, in an evil day,
This sweet-faced woman's life makes grand display.
She, when the Christians doomed were everywhere
To bitter persecution and despair,
Had seized upon their hearts, did do and dare,
Turning great Trajan's pity to their aid,
Who wrote, "My Pliny, let this woe be stayed."
She went and came amid the greatest there,
And history speaks her good as she is fair.
Sweet face on gem, how fittingly engraved,
The ravages of time for beauty stayed.

During the nineteen years of Trajan's reign
Much of his time was spent in camp and plain,
While she at Rome ceaselessly forged the chain
That bound the nation to him; her domain
Was constant entertain. Look once again
Upon that charming brow, and let us now
Consider the great mind that worked behind.

When Trajan died the fact she did conceal
Until she summoned Adrian. Rome's weal
She saw would be imperilled; she must act,
And act she did, with an exquisite tact.
From every quarter of the globe to Rome
Armies on armies would have spurred. Alone
She met the world. Made declaration there
That Trajan had adopted for his heir
And as successor in his dynasty
His cousin Adrian. Thus in her hand
She grasped the nettle safety for that land.
And Adrian proved the wisdom of her choice,
As you may learn if you consult the voice
Of history.

"I see before me now the gladiator lay,
Their Dacian sire butchered for Roman holiday"

Is a sad picture of society
In Trajan's reign, and its brutality
Drawn by a master hand, yet equally
About her, scholars, pagans, we may see
With noblest maxims of philosophy,
Enforcing virtue and morality,
How held this woman her supremacy?

Some eighteen hundred years have rolled away
Since, veiled in flesh, these features' mobile play,
Lit by their smile, emotions deep that lay
Within the hearts of those she loved that day;
Here as we see them on this gem clear cut,
Sweet face, we love thee for thy beauty, but
Still more for virtues that thy life controlled.
Did ever poet's arms a fairer woman hold?

AH! CHE LA MORTE.

There is a picture you have often seen
In the grand gallery by Poet hung,
'Neath which all linger for awhile to dream
Dreams past the compass of an earthly tongue
To properly unfold.

Oh! loneliness untold!

A white-haired, venerable man alone
Sits on a mountain top, alone to die;
A golden twilight's parting tints are thrown
Across the scene for the last time his eye
Will e'er behold.

Life's tale is told.

Stript of all earthly things, like naked soul,
Relieved of all life's honors and its cares,
His parting glance still o'er that scene doth roll,
His voice a mournful tone impressive wears.

'Tis hard to part

With earth, sad heart!

"Farewell, oh, stubborn host, led now so long,
That but the morrow's dawn do there await
To cross yon river, buoyed with hope so strong,
And leave me here, all heedless of my fate!

Mine was the pain;

Another reaps the gain!"

On the last round of Jacob's ladder stand
Four men to-day, who all have passed four score;
Each waiteth but the outstretched, helping hand
To pass the bourne whence traveller no more
Shall e'er return.

While we may yet discern
These aged figures on that topmost round,
Let us their aims and exits analyze.
Why should suns set 'midst darkness so profound,
That in Aurora's splendor had their rise?
If manhood aim aright,
The end should not be Night.

Bismarck, Lesseps, Gladstone, e'er ye depart,
Leave us some token that ye find the end
Is worth the cost ye paid to stand apart,
And pose, as if mankind ye did transcend.
Your end seems vanity
Of vanity. Err we?
Oh! man of blood and iron, who would bind
Your fellow man to your triumphal car?
The fate you forged for others you did find,
And the vast host you led, now from afar,
Your fallen state
Indifferent contemplate.
Who takes the sword
Will perish by the sword.

Does the end pay, Lesseps? Would that the tomb
Could swallow up your error—Panama.
Why with false figures dared you to presume
To lead to ruin through your evil star
The little ones of earth,
Who trusted to your worth?
Whom others would mislead,
Himself falls prey to greed.

Gladstone, with darkened sight and feeble frame,
Like Moses, look upon a thankless host,
Whom you no more shall lead. Was this the fame
Through years of strife you did your uttermost
At last to win?
Is peace within?
Ambition, courage, strength,
Reach dismal goal at length.

Triumvirate of disappointed men,
Look at the figure standing at your side—
Giuseppe Verdi, wearing diadem;
Still crowned with honors, yet devoid of pride,
His end, his dream, all peace.
His glory will increase,
And generations yet unborn will sing
The grand conceptions of this peaceful king,
Who sought his fellow mortals to delight;
His force was love, and yours the force of might.
No disappointment, but a halo bright,
Gilds his last hours, as, passing from our sight,
Celestial harmonies to Heaven invite.

List, as the mists enfold that aged frame,
What tender words those dying lips proclaim:—
“I give and I bequeath all I possess,
A million dollars, be it more or less,
To found a home where peace and happiness
In their last days poor troubadors may bless,
Where they may shielded be from all distress.
This fortune a glad world has given me,
'Tis fitting they who sang my melody,
By it from want should now protected be.
Good night. Amen, until we meet again.”

THE REJECTED STONE.

The boot of Italy, we will assume,
Is on the left foot by some chance or doom.
Cape Vaticano, then, toe joint will be
By geographical anatomy.
A gouty point certes, you will agree,
And none more perilous upon that sea.
A lofty light house there with lurid flame,
Like inflammation in the human frame,
Their pains and perils do alike proclaim.
From this high tower, one sees, afar, Stromboli,
And even Aetna's snow crowned peak so hoary.
As'gouty toe shows glimpse of Purgatory,
You may perceive how good our simile,
Why "Vaticano" this cape called should be,
Since we are told there's where they keep the key
From pains and Purgatory souls to free.

There is a legend from the far, dim past,
Minerva's foot here rested when she cast
Mount Aetna on the Titan, to hold him fast.
Now, having shown that here the sacred foot
Hath pressed this soil and its indenture put,
And, furthermore, that it's called Vaticano,
We will a satire show—Americano.

If we have brought you to Cape Vaticano,
'Tis not to leave you gazing on oceano;
But in the hope that you will go a mile
Or two with us to Mileto. You smile.
'Tis well the walk with pleasant talk beguile.

Mileto is a very ancient town,
In centuries long past had its renown.
Was birthplace of Roger, who wore the crown.
It has a charm of scene and peacefulness
That's very winning, as you will confess
When we are there; and this it was, they say,
That, long before, an abbot came one day,
And, being won upon by its seclusion,
Conceived the thought there could be no intrusion
To mar the meditations of his flock,
Since nothing there their eyes or thoughts would shock.
And then he built an abbey and a church
That stood for ages, till one day a lurch
Or earthquake shock shook them all down.
We'll see their ruins when we reach the town.

Among the religieux of that community
Was one who for his work shall here remembered be.
He had been bred in Rome full courteously;
Had pondered well lore of antiquity.

Beyond our power to-day to learn his name,
Or to recite achievements of his fame,
Or how from vanities to turn he came.
Whether through disappointed love, or weariness
Of flesh, or whether drawn by its own loveliness,
He to the cloister turned for happiness.
What holy visions came there to reward,
Unto what sweet communings there he soared
In contemplation of his Lord, adored,
Are curiosities that we must hoard
Until all secrets are revealed by God.

Among the things of earth he from his mind
Could not divorce was an old stone. It twined
Such tendrils 'round his thought; in vain he sought
Its mystic operation to explain.
The more he thought the stronger grew the chain
Upon his fancies, and to pass it came
One day that he said to the abbot, "Pray,
Give me some days of leave, to go away;
Th' Eternal City I would see once more."
"Then go in peace, my son," and through the door
With sandal shod, and clad with cord and gown,
Leaning on pilgrim's staff, he left the town,
Intent, like Paul, that he at Rome would be;
'Tis clear such men are led by destiny.

'Twas in the broad moonlight, on Appian Way,
He drew near to the city. At that day
Peril in every road for travellers lay.
But he who earthly things hath put away,
Safely, securely, passes life's highway.
Though infinitely rich is despised prey,
For thieves impotent are to steal what they
So openly to view as wealth display.

"The walls of lofty Rome," "Rome's lofty walls"
Still guard the old she wolf. The sentries' calls
Are music to his ears; the soft moonlight
Gilds with a halo all things to his sight.
He sits him down to wait for break of day,
And gives the rein to fancies now in play.
What noble heart can view these walls unmoved,
Nor see the centuries which there are grooved?
The Goth, the vandal, time, war, famine, fire,
Have done their worst—those walls rise ever higher!
From the purifier new life acquire.

Lord, what is man that Thou rememberst him?
Millions of men before these walls so grim,
The seed of man in life's blood here have sown,
Yet perished, all upwept, unsung, unknown.
Ah, no! How prone to err, each man that died
Came by Thy purpose, that him sanctified.
In Thy remembrance he must yet abide;
Even these stones live missions to perform.
The still, small voice, and not the whirlwind's storm,
Still unto man Thy purposes inform.
Behold! Thy servant sitteth here alone,
Seeking to do Thy will, and through a stone
Thy purpose to accomplish all unknown.

In through the gates he entered with the dawn;
He greeted none, and for no past did mourn.
He came to where a house in ruin lay,
And found the stone we show you here to-day.
To Mileto he had it borne away.
Of him no more these ancient legends say.

Gaze on the ruins of that ancient abbey!
How "Time, the beautifier of the dead," we
Find has softened all the dismal gaps and peaks
With its graceful festoons as each year on creeps
"The ivy green," whose charitable mantle
With each new need providing new folds ample
Covers "the soils and lossels" of an evil day
That wrecked this glorious pile, of beauty made decay.
And there stands the old church, whose ancient bell
Morning and evening in each cloistered cell
Called the good monks their precious beads to tell.
Some feet below the ground they all sleep well.
Just there, below the chancel window placed,
Stood the great stone from Rome. 'Tis now replaced
Within the new cathedral's wall. See, deeply traced,
Its message from the past still undefaced.

PROCOPE MANVS LEBO CONTRADEVM

QVIME INNOCENTEM
SVS TV LIT
QVAEVI XITAN NOS XX.
POS PRO CIVS

Oh, "read, for thou canst read," this awful prayer!
To him who seeks intent, it will declare
Far more than would appear is graven there.
A woman's death, her innocent, brief day,
Were motive causes of intent that lay
Within the brain of him who thus did say,
"I lift my hands to God"—not hands of clay.
The worm that feeds on them will, too, decay;
But living hands imperishably may
Bring down Thy vengeance, for which here I pray.
I lift my hands to God! Freemason, he.
A word misspelled informs us equally
That he perchance was not of high degree;
But he had learned his craft diligently,
As after these long ages now we see.
"I lift my hands to God!" None escape may,
However long delayed the evil day.
What was the vengeance? God alone can say.
Somewhere, some one, perchance, may still abide
To whose forebears this incident applied.
Is this entreated vengeance satisfied?

Let us retrace our steps to Vaticano.
Yet stop! Why diggeth there il Sagrestano,
Outside this half-filled churchyard's stony pale,
Grave for mortality's remnants so frail,
And that long train bearing the bier that come
With sprig of palm in hand of every one?
That is, or was, Depretis,* but no priest
Sings his last requiem, for the deceased
Was a Freemason. Ah, humanity,
Rejoice those ancient hands still toil for thee!
Behold, a nation bows all reverently
As the Prime Minister of Italy,
"Deep in his narrow cell" all peacefully,
Freemasons' arms now lower to his rest.
They with no empty praises him invest,
But in the grave each man after the other
Throws tender sprig of green. "Alas, my brother!"

I lift my hands to God, an ancient stone
The builders of a temple would reject;
And yet it came at length to stand alone,
The crowning glory of its architect;
And the Grand Master, in all things perfect,
The stone that bears His name will still protect.

I lift my hands to God!

*A terrible satire in the name.

PREFACE,

The Mergenthaler type maker and setter is perhaps the marvel of the century. It and the Century Dictionary, which has so amplified our English language by borrowing about one hundred and fifty thousand words from other languages, have rendered the use of italics quite an unnecessary extravagance and waste of time in bookmaking, and the author has deemed them of so little value (as compared with their increased cost) that he has omitted them. All cultivated people will recognize at a glance the appropriate places where they should be and are not, and may amuse themselves by accenting and underscoring with their pencils as they read, if their taste in letters be so fastidious that they cannot be happy without them. "Chacun a son gout." The gratification of such nicety of taste will perhaps lead to a more attentive reading of the subject matter, in which case the writer is likely to rise in their esteem. When posthumously he shall attain to the dignity of a silken cover and profuse illustration, all errors will then be revised and corrected in a manner to satisfy even the most critical.

As he who confesses and asks pardon has half atoned his fault, the critical reader will assuredly not withhold forgiveness. The prefaces of others have been for years an interesting study to your friend whose little work is in your hand; yet this is his first attempt on his own account, and may therefore invest it in your remembrance with some added interest, as it also may give you some insight to his aims and aspirations.

Years ago he mentally resolved that he would not sell his brains to a publisher, but would make for himself what money was to be made by being his own publisher. Cattivello, having a novel now ready to print, undertakes to get his experience as a publisher—and economically determines to try a small book first. For the benefit of others he records the experience so far gained. He presented himself at the office of the New York Herald, which advertises to do composition, and submitting his manuscript received an estimate for the book. At this point a Poet's reflective thought evolved a caution. Try "The Highlands' Lights" first, and see how it looks in proof. It appearing fairly well to his eye, he then left the balance of the matter to be set up. A printer and a bookbinder were easily found, with whom he contracted separately, both of them agreeing to carry out his design to the letter.

At the last moment, when all these peaks have been climbed, the author seats himself to write a preface. A book without a preface is, in his opinion, like a rustic boor who intrudes upon you without proper announcement or the formality of a knock at the door.

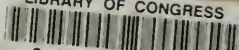
From the peak whereon he sits Cattivello looks forward to other peaks beyond; having surmounted the obstacle of a publisher, how will he reach the Public; how sell his book now that he has it to sell? The reflection at this point forces itself upon one that, after all, the publisher is a useful member of society, and may have a valuable experience that it took years to gain, and the chief feature in which may be the knowledge how to sell books. Not knowing where to find his enemies (if any there be) to whom courageously to offer his Quartetto for sale, he must perforce turn his footsteps toward the camp of his friends, if it is to be sold.

Cattivello reverently confesses that he has been blessed with many friends. Unlike Don Quixote, he has written his own preface without consulting any of them, but in a manner closely resembling that Knight of imperishable renown, undaunted courage, wide experience and vast erudition, he to-day rides forth alone and entrusts to the Post Office Department of his country one thousand copies of his Quartetto addressed only to friends whose hands he has pressed in amity and good will, firmly believing that their curiosity to read what he may have to say in his novel may induce them promptly to acknowledge the receipt hereof.

A great French writer is reported to have replied to the question, "What is the prime factor in success?":—"L'audace et toujours l'audace." Behold, then, Cattivello's work completed is in your hand and you are reading his sublimely audacious Preface.

"Dear Sir or Madame—Truly your forgiveness he implores, but the fact is" he has taken the liberty of sending you a book written to sell. If after its perusal you think it worth one dollar (the price at which it is for sale everywhere) he trusts you will feel no hesitancy in sending him that amount, and if, on the other hand, you do not regard it as of such value, will you then be so obliging as to toss it out of the window into the street, where, perhaps, (the critical reader will please to doubly underscore "perhaps"), some one may pick it up, and even read it with such pleasure as to be glad to send its price, for either of which kindnesses Cattivello will hold you in lasting remembrance. As this "Quartetto" is the overture to his novel, he takes the liberty of inserting his Preface here.

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